



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

to be correct. The essay fills a place in Wordsworth criticism left hitherto most unaccountably unoccupied; and the modest little volume will, in many a library, jostle fellows larger and more pretentious that are by no means wiser or sweeter than itself, as to critical spirit and business-like effective style. May Mr. Gingerich's next book have a more alluring dress and bear a more imposing patronymic (we allude to the publisher's)!

KING ALFRED'S JEWEL. By the author of *Mors et Victoria*. London and New York: John Lane Co.

Here is a pious deed, but one, alas, if not *invita Minerva*, then without the preliminary draft of Bacchic madness, needful, if great drama is to be born! The chief defect in this attempted exhibition of the great Alfred, is the triviality of the dramatic fable invented for the purpose; the misconception of a jewel's destination! To have Queen Elswitha vulgarly jealous, brutally suspicious and ready for murder at the misconstruction of an ambiguous word, doubting Alfred's chastity, these conceptions hardly achieve the author's aim; unless the concluding mutual forgiveness and little Elfreda's fortunate survival of her melodramatic throttling by a queen, and dungeoning in a handy dark closet, are claimed as satisfactory atonement for the vulgarization, quite cheaply theatrical, which has been endured by the chief characters in the second and third acts. Numanera is operatic in her unreality, and Cornewulf, Monfichet, and Cedric would be shadows, did not the bones of their abstraction grind one another audibly from scene to scene. In one word, there is no real dramatic action in the play as a whole, and no real life in the dramatic personages taken together. The verse is monotonously endstopped, and does not leap and burn, croon and linger, jostle and shriek by turns, as should dramatic verse.

When all these things are said for truth's sake, we should pay our tribute to the first act, and especially to the fourth scene, in which Alfred thrillingly wins over his traitorous Saxon subjects. The picture of Elfreda and the fairies has idyllic charm and some of her songs have a lyric lilt:

Violet so blue,
 O to be you,
 Down in the cool green grass.
 Violet so blue,
 O to be you,
 Watching the clouds as they pass.

Apart from the careful utilization of the historic Alfred's own weighty words, what perhaps strikes one most favorably are the songs which everybody seems to sing, all through the dramatic poem, and which are on a far higher poetic level than the soliloquies in which every one, also, more or less indulges in turn:

SONG OF THE SAXON SOLDIERS

We met the Danes upon the down
 With battle-axe and brand;
 We drove the Danes across the down,
 We drove them from the land.
 O the salt seas!
 O the oak trees!
 O the mighty men of England!

CORNEWULF'S SONG

Beneath her maiden snows,
 All petal-folded deep,
 Lieth the fair primrose,
 Asleep — asleep.

Elswitha and Alfred's conjugal love is doubtless very romantic, and were it not at moments a bit garrulously sweetish, might altogether pass for exemplary. We quote a specimen of wifely laud that should make any husband skeptical of Alfred's fair play in love:

Alfred, thou art to me as Hector was;
 Thou art my husband and my father, too,
 My mother and my nurse; but thou art more —
 More e'en than Hector to Andromache —
 Thou art my King and High Priest of God.
 And now thou goest from me to confront
 Unequalled danger — to meet direful death;
 Out of the deep my soul cries 'No' to thee.

As we reconsider the whole poem, we can see at least one use in it — beyond the exhibitions of noble intentions and a well-

bred literary accomplishment — namely, a great theme. If the anonymous author had really had — beyond the first act — a dramatically worthy tale to tell, worthy of her theme, her earnestness (are we right in the pronoun?) would have wrought a greater thing, as is testified by the immeasurably higher level of Act I above Acts II and III. But it is worth our while to remind our anonymous author, that a dramatic poem is constructed rather than written. That the action is the theatric Pegasus, and not a loyal hero worship — of never so worthy a historic personage! Alfred is very well, but his jewel will not serve to exhibit him on the boards although the jewel is so great a temptation — and might do excellently well as an “Ibsen Symbol,” and prove wholly innocuous, provided it were not exploited as a *Deus ex machina* for the minor plot, or worse yet, made to do duty for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Alfred’s marital Eden with the operatic Numanera as serpent.

THE DAYS THAT PASS. By Helen Huntington. New York: John Lane Company.

Birth, on a blazing noon,
 Childhood among the flowers,
 Youth 'neath a changing moon,
 Love with its silver hours,
 Pain in a silence born,
 Knowledge with fitful gleam,
 Death, and a life outworn;—
 Lo! It was all a dream!

Would the eighty-five pages of the little book perused were no more! We have had “Christ in Chicago,” and sundry other paradoxes in our day, but “the Lord came into the opera house” involves taking certain dress parades of society in far too serious a fashion:

He saw the debauch of colors and jewels and flowers,
 The pageant of play and the group of the world in its power,
 And the eyes of the Lord, yes, the eyes of the holy Lord,
 Look deep in the souls and discovered the secret shame,
 The pride and the lust and the treachery furtive and sure,
 The disease and desire and iniquity, covered and hid.